



A Theatergoer's Guide to Shakespeare's Themes

Robert Fallon

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Following on the success of his *Theatergoer's Guide to Shakespeare*, Robert Fallon now examines the themes in Shakespeare's plays, the revelations about human nature that give them substance and weight and such an enduring quality. Again Mr. Fallon sets aside academic jargon and the machinery of scholarship; he writes for intelligent playgoers, seeking to enhance their enjoyment of a performance. (Of course, casual readers too will find his interpretations absorbing.) The book surveys the most pervasive of Shakespeare's themes, among them love, war, illusion, statecraft, heroism, the supernatural, and the comic. In chapters devoted to each of eleven such themes, Mr. Fallon explains how these patterns of meaning were viewed in Shakespeare's time, what history the poet draws upon in presenting them on the stage, and how he suggests them through his pageant of men and women engaged in the business of living. Mr. Fallon offers a wealth of illustrative examples from all thirty-eight plays attributed to the Bard. His lively narrative provides ample detail, ensuring that the examples are accessible to readers who may not be familiar with some of the less frequently staged works. As in *A Theatergoer's Guide to Shakespeare*, Mr. Fallon succeeds in capturing Shakespeare's endless appeal: his ability to place before us figures with whom we are familiar—the ardent lover, the swaggering soldier, the tyrant, villain, and clown, as well as mothers, fathers, and children, both treacherous and devoted—all of whom confront the experiences that define the eternal themes of the human condition.

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